

EXHIBIT D-2
PUBLIC ACCESS EASEMENT
San Simeon Point
Recommended Access Plan
October 7, 2003
(updated July 8, 2004)

Document Outline

A. Draft Recommendations for Public Access Plan

The following Plan addresses four overarching categories related to public access at San Simeon Point:

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Recommendation 1-2: Prepare a Management Plan
2. **Supervised/Controlled Access**
Recommendation 2-1: Limit the Number of Daily Visitors
Recommendation 2-2: Public Access Days and Hours of Operation
Recommendation 2-3: Parking/Trailhead Coordination
Recommendation 2-4: Single Point of Entry
Recommendation 2-5: Direct Visitors to Approved Destinations
Recommendation 2-6: Define Uses Allowed on the Property
Recommendation 2-7: Docent Program
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3. **Public Safety**
Recommendation 3-1: Separate Bulls from People
Recommendation 3-2: Safety Fencing and Signage (Limited)
Recommendation 3-3: Close Hazardous Trails
4. **The Visitor Experience**
Recommendation 4-1: Provide a Variety of Open Space Experiences
Recommendation 4-2: Visitor Education and Interpretive Program
Recommendation 4-3: Trail Amenities and Improvements

B. Descriptions of Recommended Trail Segments

1. **Point of Entry / Trailhead**
2. **Point of entry to the bluff overlooks at the Point**
3. **Point to West Overlook**
4. **East-West Connector**
5. **Vista Point /Return to Trailhead**

Attachments:

Draft Recommended Access Plan Schematic (Exhibit D-2-A)

A. Draft Recommendations for Public Access Plan

Nestled between Highway 1, grazing pastures, and the Pacific Ocean, San Simeon Point is a hidden jewel of open space previously closed to the general public, except as allowed under the Hearst consent to access (Civil Code 813). Opening San Simeon Point to visitors would allow the public to enjoy a distinctive coastal property of local and statewide importance and interest. The natural beauty and cultural significance of San Simeon Point, including the cypress forest, panoramic views of the coastline, and the site of the historic whaling station (1852-1894), could be available for visitor enjoyment and appreciation.

This Draft Recommendation for Public Access was written as a guide for planning to allow visitors to San Simeon Point. This proposal presents an approach to managing access that respects the property owner's commitment to preserving San Simeon Point and the public's desire to walk on the land. Key principles of the Plan are to balance public access at San Simeon Point with ongoing Hearst operations and protection of its serene beauty, tranquility, and natural resources.

The San Simeon Point trail system would provide supervised access to scenic coastal resources in a setting unique to the region. Existing trails provide sweeping views of and access to undeveloped bluffs and would offer visitors exposure to a diversity of views, scenery, micro-climates, and habitats in a beautiful and historical setting.

Access to San Simeon Point will originate near the warehouses of Old San Simeon Village from a new parking lot and trailhead. This single point of access provides connections to W.R. Hearst State Beach and the California Coastal Trail.

Note: Refer to the Schematic Public Access Plan for photo references and trail facilities.

Goal: Provide for supervised public access at San Simeon Point for hiking and natural scenery viewing in a manner that is safe and enjoyable for visitors and without adverse change to the existing and historic nature of this special environment.

1. San Simeon Point Management

An open space this size (approximately 100 acres) with anticipated annual visitors potentially in the thousands requires an organization capable of managing and conducting regular and consistent activities related to trail construction and maintenance, docent coordination, emergency and safety issues, vegetation control, etc.

Recommendation 1-1: Potential Non-Profit Involvement

An arrangement with a non-profit organization could undertaken to assist the easement holder in coordinating daily activities related to public access management. Typical responsibilities of the non-profit could include coordination of docents and rangers, implementation of San Simeon Point Management Plan (See Recommendation 1-2 below), public educational and research programs, trail maintenance, and vegetation management.

Recommendation 1-2: Prepare a Management Plan

Opening San Simeon Point to visitors should be preceded by preparation of a management plan, other than existing permissive use allowed by Hearst per Civil Code Section 813, to identify variables that may affect the intensity of use and trail construction, such as soil type, slope, vegetation types, visitor management, etc. The Management Plan should be based on ecological criteria, desires to keep the property relatively undeveloped and peaceful, anticipate and manage

the number and frequency of visitors, potential impacts upon the natural environment, and the quality experience of the user. The Plan should be created by a steering committee composed of Hearst, the American Land Conservancy, Coastal Conservancy, and other selected state agencies and citizens. The issue of property owner indemnification should be addressed in the Plan. Hearst will have the sole approval of the final plan.

2. Supervised/Controlled Access

Public access to San Simeon Point would be allowed under a conservation easement that allows public access over the property within defined areas. Allowing visitors at San Simeon Point requires mechanisms to ensure control where, when, and how the property is used. The overall objective of establishing supervised access is to ensure that San Simeon Point remains a tranquil, uncrowded place and is used in a manner in accordance with the management plan. Some areas will be off-limits to the public to avoid incompatibilities with cattle operations and potential safety or environmental issues. The public access program should: provide for the Hearst continued right to use the property for management of the land; allow protection of on-site resources; enable visitors to enjoy a serene open space environment; and allow for grazing.

Recommendation 2-1: Limit Number of Daily Visitors

In order to provide visitors with a high quality outdoor experience and to protect the integrity of the resources present on-site, the maximum number of public visitors should be limited to no more than 100 people per day. One method to manage the intensity of public use is to limit the amount of visitors allowed at the site at any one time. Densities may be based upon the number of docents/staff present onsite, weather conditions, special events and group visits (e.g., school field trips, organized tours, etc.), or to allow guests to experience an outing with infrequent encounters with other people. Children and adolescent visitors under the age of 16 will be accompanied by an adult.

- The Management Plan should consider implementing a trial public access period to ascertain whether the maximum daily number of visitors should be adjusted up or down based upon docents/staff availability, seasonal needs, resource protection, parking availability and usage, and other variables that may require adjustments to be made.
- The Management Plan should consider exempting school tours from daily visitor maximums.

Recommendation 2-2: Public Access Days and Hours of Operation

San Simeon Point should be available to the public no less than 300 days a year to allow other necessary uses to take place on the property (maintenance, grazing, and resource protection/restoration, Hearst operations). The Point should be open to the public an average of five to six days a week, notwithstanding periods that the property is closed for other uses. Public access should be during daytime hours only, with access beginning no earlier than ½ hour after sunrise and no later than ½ hour before sunset. In consideration of the availability of non-profit staff, hours may need to be more limited; for example, they could range from 10 to 4 during fall and winter and 9 to 6 during spring and summer.

Closed periods should be planned in advance and coordinated to provide as regular of an open schedule as possible. Vegetation management and restoration may be best performed during closed periods. Grazing will be needed to manage vegetation in public areas on the Point.

Recommendation 2-3: Parking/Trailhead Coordination

Coordinated parking and trailhead management are recommended to control visitor density (point of entry/trailhead management is discussed below). Options for managing the flow of visitors at the parking area include providing a fixed and limited number of parking spaces and establishing parking time limits. It is important to anticipate the arrival of occasional large groups to San Simeon Point by bus and the need for bus parking.

- Large group and special event staging could be shuttled in from the Hearst Castle parking lot.

Recommendation 2-4: Single Point of Entry

A single point of entry should be created to regulate the number and flow of visitors allowed on the Point at any one time. Access trails from the parking lot, California Coastal Trail (CCT), and one trail from W.R. Hearst Beach should lead directly to a single trailhead for San Simeon Point. All visitors should depart from and return to the trailhead through a looped trail system. Trailhead controls should be coordinated with parking capacity. This Plan recommends giving preference to smaller groups and establishing a limit to the size of a single group allowed on the property through a reservation system or other means of notice. Groups over 10 persons in size should be given entrance gradually so that no one group dominates the site and intrudes upon the experiences of other visitors.

- In order to prevent unauthorized and unsupervised entry onto the property, the public area should be enclosed with transparent and attractive fencing up to this entrance. The fencing would serve to keep visitors out of the bull pasture and the bulls out of the public area (See Public Safety Recommendation 3-2, below).
- The entrance should be gated and have a docent booth and kiosk to prohibit visitor access during closed hours. (See fencing on Schematic Plan)
- There are approximately three trails from San Simeon Cove Beach that lead onto the property. Two of these trails extend into the property beyond the trailhead location and would be difficult for the general population to use and should be closed. (For location, see Schematic Plan, near the trailhead)
- The loop trail would require construction of a new trail to connect the bluff trail back to the trailhead. (See Vista Point /Return to Trailhead (Yellow/Green trail))
- The trailhead would be a good site for a kiosk that posts hours of operation, contact information, guidelines for use (allowable and prohibited activities), trail maps, onsite destinations, and other similar information. The kiosk could be attended by a docent during open hours. (See Schematic Plan)

**San Simeon Cove Beach trail that
should remain open
Photo #1**



**View of San Simeon Point beach
at south end of the Point
Photo #2**



Recommendation 2-5: Direct Visitors to Approved Destinations

Given the desires to protect San Simeon Point, public access should be supervised and visitors should be directed or guided to established points of interest. Visitors should be directed to follow designated trails and keep to maintained trail corridors. There should be regular docent presence at this location. If erosion becomes a problem in this area, visitors should then be directed to focal points. To assist the visitor, trail markers should be placed at all junctions and other points where the route may be unclear. In addition, self-guiding brochures should be placed at the kiosk. In some areas, at the bluffs for instance, trail fencing may be necessary to close unsafe and/or unauthorized routes.

Recommendation 2-6: Define Allowed Public and Private Uses

When San Simeon Point is opened to the public, there will be many who want to use the property for uses that are not appropriate. As recommended in this Draft Public Access Plan, public access will be controlled by regulating the days, times, means, and areas available to them. Allowable public uses should be clearly defined and posted at the trailhead and on brochures. Public uses should be limited to passive recreation including walking/hiking, photography, and sightseeing. The following uses should not be allowed on the Point by the public: bicycling, motor vehicles of any kind, camping, horseback riding, dogs/pets (other than Seeing Eye, service, or signal dogs), games (Frisbee, kite flying, etc.), alcohol consumption, fires, and smoking. No physical improvements other than those provided in the Conservation Easement will be allowed. There should be a “pack it in, pack it out” waste disposal policy for trails and overlook/vista points. Trash receptacles should be limited to the trailhead.

Recommendation 2-7: Docent Program

The presence of identifiable docents/ staff creates a hospitable environment for visitors, ensures visitor compliance with rules and policies, and increases visitor safety. Experience shows that visitors made aware of the presence of docents in the area will most likely follow rules and stay on trails. The docent program presents two opportunities for supervised visits. On a daily basis, a number of trained volunteers would be stationed at key points along the trail and others should roam the area acting as the “eyes and ears” for protection of the resource and public safety, and to provide interpretive education about the plants, animals, and history of the site. This would allow hikers—including many locals—to enjoy the area at their own pace: at a brisk walk, or if they wish, stopping to ask a question or to take a peek at an otter or a whale through a docent’s spotting scope. Guided walks and tours may be offered on the weekends and during peak seasons. Regularly scheduled programs may help to manage the flux of daily visitors to the property. Docent walks should be limited to 10 visitors at a time and should be scheduled at 30-45 minute intervals.

Recommendation 2-8: Ranger Program

Rangers should be hired to provide back-up for the docents. Where the docents provide education and monitoring, the rangers would be the enforcement arm of the public access program. Rangers could consist of employees (or off-duty employees) of State Parks or the County Sheriff’s Office trained to deal with problem people or handle threatening situations.

3. Public Safety

Although some members of the public have used the site for hiking and nature experiences in the past (under Civil Code 813), opening San Simeon Point to increased public use will require implementation of certain measures to provide public safety.

**Trails meander around the Point
Photo #3**



**View toward W.R. Hearst State Beach
from Point Overlook (facing east)
Photo #4**



Recommendation 3-1: Separate Bulls from People

Allowing people and/or bulls unfettered access across the site may create safety problems and/or interfere with grazing operations. Currently, the bulls have use of the entire San Simeon Point from the grasslands through the forest. However, once the property is opened to the public, allowing this practice to continue may cause safety issues between the animals and humans and potentially disrupt grazing operations. Due to the size of the pasture area for bull grazing and the potential problems with a bull/human interface, the bull pasture should be fenced to separate the bulls from areas open to public access. This entails most of the forested area and also a small area at the bluff just outside the forest toward Windsurfer Beach. (See fencing on Schematic Plan) During periods of high vegetation in the forest, the ranch manager may want to take advantage of the forested area during holiday periods, after hours, or other closed periods as described in Recommendation 2-2.

- Construct fencing to keep people out of the bull pasture and the bulls out of the forest and trail areas.
- Schedule the bulls to continue to use the forested areas when the Point is closed to the public.

Recommendation 3-2: Safety Fencing and Signage (Limited)

Some areas may require trail fencing to direct pedestrians to keep to designated trails and/or to increase public safety. Along the bluffs where the public is allowed to traverse laterally from overlook to overlook (Point to North Spur--Blue/Green Trail), trail fencing should be installed. The same fencing may be used to close trail segments that are closed for revegetation or safety reasons. When fencing is adjacent to steep cliffs, guard rails will be necessary. Simple post and rope fencing is recommended for these areas. A small number of discreet signs should be used to urge hikers to avoid dangerous cliffs or areas of fragile vegetation.

**Example of dangerous bluff trail that
should be closed
Photo #6**



Recommendation 3-3: Close Hazardous Trails

Some existing trails should be closed; in particular, the two trails leading up from San Simeon Cove Beach (one unimproved trail near the proposed trailhead should remain open) and the trail leading to the south-facing beach at the Point is difficult to navigate and would be a difficult route for many visitors. If this beach is to be designated accessible, significant improvements to the trail should be made. Other trails that may need to be revegetated and closed are those between bluff overlooks on the west facing bluff that are not indicated on the plan for public access.

4. The Visitor Experience

While public access at San Simeon Point will be supervised and controlled to some extent, “control” should not be the dominant impression of visitors. It is important that the serene beauty and distinctive environment at San Simeon Point are the principal qualities perceived, enjoyed, and remembered. To that end, the public should have access to assorted natural settings with an appropriate level of improvements that guide, protect, and educate.

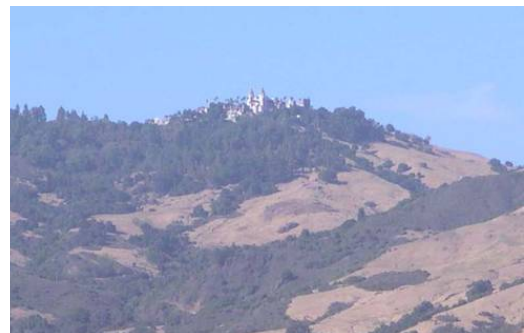
Recommendation 4-1: Provide a Variety of Open Space Experiences

Much of the appeal of San Simeon Point is the diversity of natural experiences that can be enjoyed. The Public Access Program should include and perhaps emphasize opportunities to experience coastal forest walks, bluff overlooks, Castle and other long range views, ocean, and beach views. Trail access with like experiences should be available to individuals in wheelchairs. Natural and cultural history should also be highlighted aspects of the experience at San Simeon Point. Exceptional vista areas should be formalized as destination points at the terminus of the Point, other blufftop overlooks, and at or near the “bench mark” to provide the opportunity for visitors to catch spectacular views.

**Deer on proposed forest trail
Photo #7**



**Castle View from Vista Point
Photo #8**



Recommendation 4-2: Visitor Education and Interpretive Program

Education is the best tool for fostering stewardship and respect. Bring the experience at San Simeon Point full circle with interpretive displays that teach people about wildlife, plants, and the natural and cultural history of the Ranch. Through the use of a brochure, self-guided tours could include information on interesting sites, stories, and lore. On weekends and open holidays, visitors might take advantage of docent-led tours. One idea is to take reservations for these special tours and stage them from the Hearst Castle Visitor Center (coordinated with trailhead management). There could also be themed visits such as Whaling Days or Marine Mammals. A trailhead kiosk could post hours of operation, contact information, guidelines for use (allowable and prohibited activities), trail maps, onsite destinations, and other similar information.

Recommendation 4-3: Trail Amenities and Improvements

San Simeon Point should generally remain in the current state with limited improvements that protect the natural environment, educate, provide public safety and security, and provide comfort. The open character of San Simeon Point should be retained as much as possible. Some improvements, such as small interpretive signs, trails signs, parking, and possibly a restroom should be provided to ensure access to a broad community. The visitor center should include restrooms and drinking water. An alternative location for restrooms could be near the parking lot in a discreet building in the same architectural style as the Julia Morgan buildings of Old San Simeon Village. Prominent vista areas such as the Point and the Vista at the benchmark should be accompanied by the sensitive placement of benches and interpretive signage.

**View to the Parking Area
near Warehouses
Photo # 9**



B. Descriptions of Recommended Trail Segments

Note: Refer to the Schematic Public Access Plan for photo references and trail facilities.

Point of Entry / Trailhead (*)

The trailhead to the San Simeon Point Coastal Trail will commence at the beginning of the forest adjacent to the bluff overlooking the beach at San Simeon Bay. There would be two main feeders into the trailhead: from the parking lot/San Simeon Village area and from the trail up from San Simeon Cove Beach. The trailhead should be attended by a docent/ranger who controls the flow of visitors so that no more than 25 people are within the boundary of the public area at one time.

Point of Entry to the Point (Pink/Green trail)

It is anticipated that most visitors will want to walk through the forested areas to the scenic overlooks at the ocean bluffs. The hiking trail will mostly follow the existing dirt path along the bluff but with some improvements. As appropriate along the way, the trail might consist of a gravel pathway or boardwalks bounded by post and rope fencing, guardrail or native vegetation to encourage visitors to stay on the designated track. A small number of discreet signs would urge hikers to avoid dangerous cliffs or areas of fragile vegetation. The two existing unimproved trails to/from the beach should be closed as they enter the public area beyond the trailhead, are not readily usable by the average visitor, and may be unsafe. One trail to the beach at the point prior to the trailhead should remain open.

At the Point Area, visitors will likely want to roam, stopping to look over the numerous vista points. This would be a good location for docents to mill about to answer questions and monitor trails.

The Point to West Overlook (Blue /Green trail)

The trail along this area follows the existing dirt path under the trees. There are a few trail spurs that extend from this trail toward the ocean that offer stunning views out over the ocean and of the rocky bluffs. A few of these should be retained as vista/overlooks. Others are recommended to be revegetated and closed (See Schematic Plan). If hikers wish to walk outside the forest canopy, a short length of trail traverses the bluff line to connect three of the overlooks. Some bluff fencing may be necessary for safety purposes.

This Plan recommends ending the trail just beyond the edge of the forest and the creation of an overlook that takes advantage of the dramatic views north to the adjacent beach and Piedras Blancas Lighthouse and views south of the rocky shore along the Point.

Trail from entry point to bluffs
Photo #10



Trail to West Overlook through forest
Photo #11



View of the Point from
West Overlook
Photo #12



East-West Connector (Orange/Green trail)

Mid-way to the end of the forest, hikers would have an option to traverse through the forest to return to the trailhead along a winding trail characterized by woody debris and mildly rugged terrain. This trail offers an alternative, quieter hiking experience than the bluff trails.

Vista Point /Return to Trailhead (Yellow/Green trail)

To return to the trailhead, the route would lead to the “benchmark” where extraordinary views may be seen over the ocean and back toward the Castle. The vista point at this spot should be made a formalized destination with a viewing area and a few amenities such as benches and interpretive exhibits. This trail would then merge with the existing dirt road for a convenient way back to the trailhead.

**View from overlooks
off the trail near West Overlook
Photo #13**



**Dramatic views from the
West Overlook
Photo #14**



**Scrub chaparral below
the Vista Point
Photo #15**

